Renegade Press
PRESENTS

WORDSMITH

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Comics Buyer's Guide
Fan Awards for 1985

Vote for your favorite in each category:

1. **Favorite Editor** .....
2. **Favorite Writer** .....
3. **Favorite Artist** .....
4. **Favorite Cover Artist** .....
5. **Favorite Comic-Book Story** .....
6. **Favorite Comic Book** .....
7. **Favorite Limited Comic-Book Series or Graphic Novel** .....
8. **Favorite Book*** .....
9. **Favorite Character** .....
10. **Favorite Publication about Comics** .....

Phil Seuling Award for Favorite Direct-Sale-Only Title .....

**"Favorite Book" does not include graphic novels but can include your favorite reprint comics collection, favorite book about comics, etc. — with a copyright date of 1985*

Only material cover-dated 1985 is eligible for consideration. *Votes for ineligible material will not be counted.*

Anyone may copy and circulate this ballot, and any fan may vote only once and vote for no more than one nominee in each category. Ballot-box stuffing will result in the destruction of all ballots involved. You need not vote in all categories. ***Comics Buyer's Guide*** *is not eligible for Category 10.*

A free copy of ***Comics Buyer's Guide*** *for Aug. 1, 1986 (which will carry the results of voting) will be sent to any U.S. voter who does not already have a current or expired subscription to* ***CBG****. Votes from other countries will be counted, but we regret that a sample copy cannot be sent unless the vote is accompanied by $1.50 in U.S. funds to cover costs of handling and shipping to another country.*

Mail your ballot individually in a single envelope by June 30, 1986 to:

Comics Buyer's Guide *Fan Awards*
700 East State Street
Iola, Wisconsin 54990

Name ..... **Age** ..... **Male Female** *(circle one)*

Street or Box .....

City, State, and ZIP .....

Please type or print your vote and information clearly.

RENEGADE APPEARANCES

JULY 25-27 ATLANTA FANTASY FAIR

Bob Burden (Flaming Carrot)
Rick Hoberg (Eternity Smith)
Dennis Mallonee (Eternity Smith)
Joe Sinardi (Maxwell Mouse Follies)

JULY 31 - AUG 3 SAN DIEGO COMICCON

Michael Cherkas (The Silent Invasion)
Larry Hancock (The Silent Invasion)
Joe Judt (Strata)
Ray Murtaugh (Strata)
Jim Brozman (Strata)
Max Collins (Ms. Tree)
Terry Beatty (Ms. Tree)
David Darrigo (Wordsmith)
Barb Rausch (Neil & Vicky)
Bob Burden (Flamming Carrot)
Dan Day (Cases of Sherlock Holmes)
Dennis Mallonee (Eternity Smith)
Rick Hoberg (Eternity Smith)
Deni Loubert (Publisher)

Please note that there will be a cocktail party at the Golden Apple Comic Shop, 7711 Melrose Ave. in Los Angeles on Tuesday August 5th. It will be hosted by The Golden Apple and Renegade Press as an informal get together for fans to talk to the artists and to see how a company like Renegade survives. Everyone from Renegade will be there (with the exception of R.G. Taylor from Wordsmith). It will run from 7-9 p.m., and probably spill over into the nearest bar, if I know Renegade. Everyone is welcome to come. Bring your friends, even if they don't read comics!!

WORDSMITH

Published six times a year by Renegade Press, 10408 Oxnard Street, North Hollywood, CA. 91606. All contents® 1986 Dave Darrigo. Any inquiries regarding use of the characters, images or situations depicted should be addressed to Deni Loubert. No unauthorized reproduction allowed except for review or other journalistic purpose. Advertising rates furnished on request. Printed in Canada by Preney Print & Litho Inc., Windsor, Ontario.

NO. 6 AUGUST 1986

PUBLISHER: Deni Loubert

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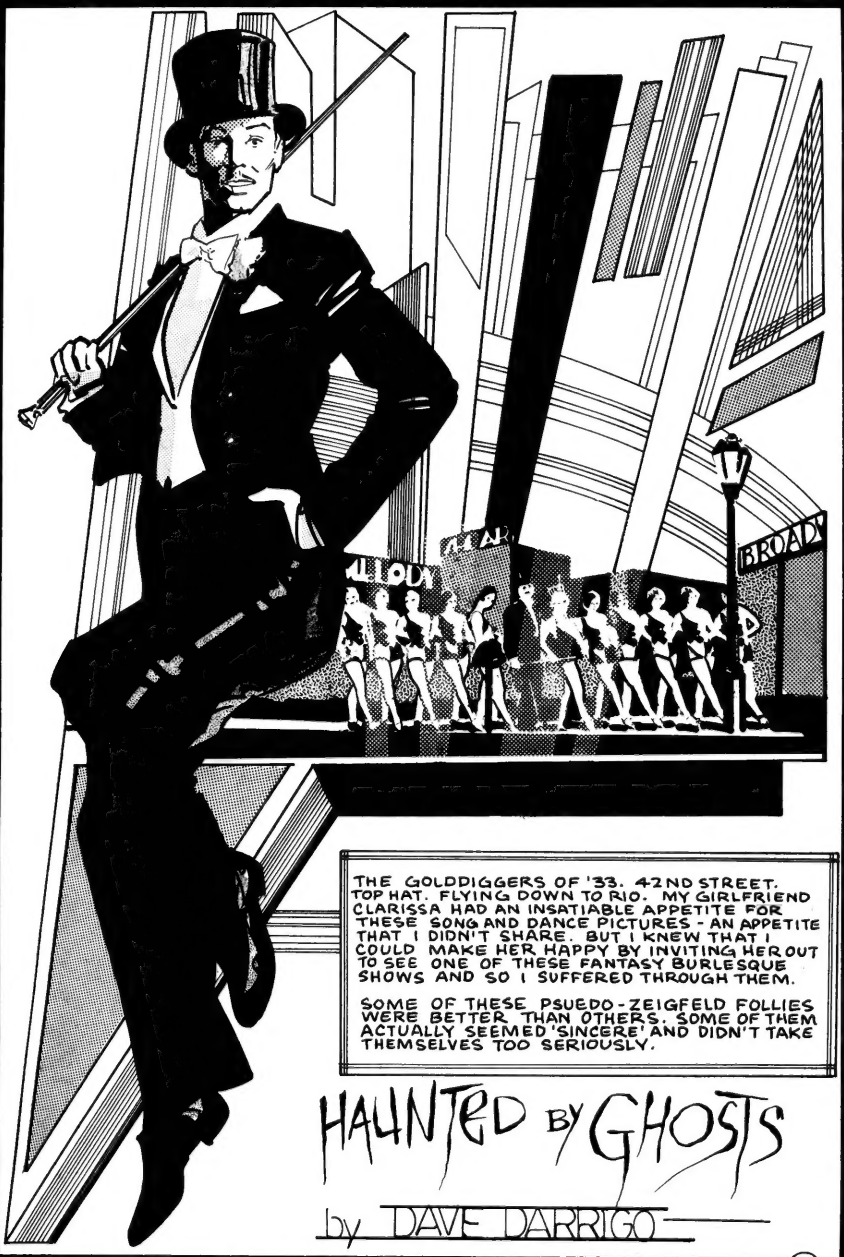


THE GOLDDIGGERS OF '33. 42ND STREET. TOP HAT. FLYING DOWN TO RIO. MY GIRLFRIEND CLARISSA HAD AN INSATIABLE APPETITE FOR THESE SONG AND DANCE PICTURES - AN APPETITE THAT I DIDN'T SHARE. BUT I KNEW THAT I COULD MAKE HER HAPPY BY INVITING HER OUT TO SEE ONE OF THESE FANTASY BURLESQUE SHOWS AND SO I SUFFERED THROUGH THEM.

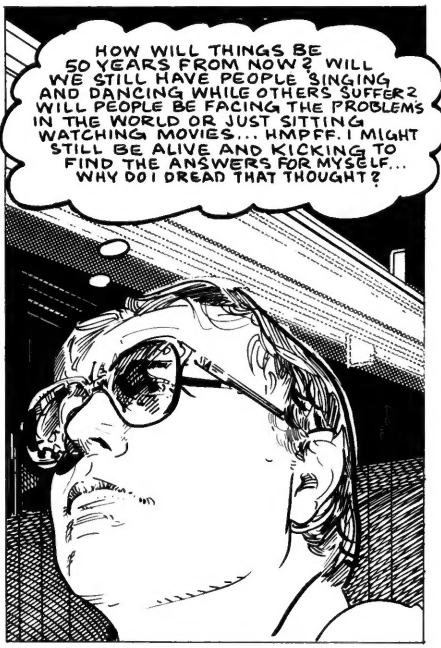
SOME OF THESE PSUEDO-ZEIGFELD FOLLIES WERE BETTER THAN OTHERS. SOME OF THEM ACTUALLY SEEMED 'SINCERE' AND DIDN'T TAKE THEMSELVES TOO SERIOUSLY.

HAUNTED BY GHOSTS

by DAVE DARRIGO

LYRIC THEATRE
CAPTAIN BLOOD
NEXT WEEK
DOVER
BUT THE ONE WE HAPPENED TO BE SITTING THROUGH TODAY WAS BORING ME.

I WONDER IF, 50 YEARS FROM NOW, THEY'LL STILL BE MAKING THESE KINDS OF MOVIES. YEAH, I GUESS THEY WILL. SINGING AND DANCING ARE SUCH AN AMERICAN TRADITION. JUST LIKE WESTERNS.


HOW WILL THINGS BE 50 YEARS FROM NOW? WILL WE STILL HAVE PEOPLE SINGING AND DANCING WHILE OTHERS SUFFER? WILL PEOPLE BE FACING THE PROBLEMS IN THE WORLD OR JUST SITTING WATCHING MOVIES... HMPFF. I MIGHT STILL BE ALIVE AND KICKING TO FIND THE ANSWERS FOR MYSELF... WHY DO I DREAD THAT THOUGHT?

ART: R. TAYLOR
LETTERS: L. TAYLOR
AUTO
PARK
CENTRAL
TAFT
WE LEFT THE THEATRE AND DECIDED TO WALK TO A NEARBY CAFE. CLARISSA KNEW THAT I WAS NOT IN A TALKATIVE MOOD TODAY. SHE DIDN'T SEEM TO LET THAT BOTHER HER.
HOWA
ROTHS
I WONDER IF I'LL STILL BE WRITING 50 YEARS FROM NOW?
HE WALKS WITH HIS HANDS IN HIS POCKETS AS IF I'M NOT EVEN HERE. HE MAKES IT HARD FOR ME TO LOVE HIM... IT'S GETTING HARDER ALL THE TIME, NOW.

I WAS SURPRISED TO SEE A SMALL MAGAZINE RACK IN THE PLACE. I COULDN'T RESIST THE IMPULSE TO CHECK IT OVER.
JOHN ST.
KRISTA'S CAFE
CLAY, DO YOU HAVE TO DO THAT NOW?
SORRY. I'LL BE RIGHT WITH YOU.
YEAH. HERE IT IS. THIS ONE HAS A NEW STORY OF MINE IN IT.
SPACE ADVENTURES
BULLY FOR YOU, CLAY WASHBURN. WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE ON A DATE AND HERE YOU ARE MAKING LOVE TO A MAGAZINE INSTEAD OF TO ME.
I PAID FOR THE PULP AND WE FOUND A TABLE.
CAN I SEE IT?
WHAT?
I SAID I'D LIKE TO SEE IT. THAT'S THE LEAST YOU CAN DO SINCE YOU'RE GIVING IT MORE ATTENTION THAN MYSELF.

I KNOW YOU'RE CURIOUS ABOUT MY WORK, BUT I DON'T THINK YOU'D —
CLAY...
JUST GIVE IT TO ME.
HERE.
SPACE ADVENTURES
IS THIS YOUR STORY? THE ONE WITH THE DRAWING OF THE SPACE COWBOY?
'FRAID SO.
MY GOD! IS THAT A SPACE COWBOY? PEOPLE MUST BE LOONY TO READ THESE THINGS.
I WANT TO TAKE THIS HOME WITH ME, CLAY. I WANT TO TAKE MY TIME AND READ IT CLOSELY
UHHH...
I'D LIKE TO SHOW IT TO MOTHER.
OH, NUTS. I'VE REALLY DONE IT NOW.

THE NEXT DAY AT THE MIDDLETON ESTATE.
'MOON RANCH SHOWDOWN' BY PAUL WEXLER.
The Space Patrol rocketship came through the clouds of the alien moon like a silver spear-tip.
The beautiful native moon-girl was standing in the fields near the ranch-complex.
She watched as the silver ship landed at a safe distance from her and the grazing horses.

"We're looking for a dangerous alien criminal, miss," Turner said. "They call him Zoxx."

After the moon-girl convinced them that she had seen no one the two patrolmen continued their hunt. Then the alien used his shape-changing powers to transform himself from his moon-girl disguise.

OH, CLAY. HOW CAN A GROWN MAN WRITE ABOUT CHARACTERS CALLED 'ZOXX'?

WHY DID YOU DO THAT, CLAY? THE MOON-GIRL WAS THE ONLY CHARACTER THAT I LIKED.

"Look," Turner told his partner. "There's Zoxx! He's running to our ship!"

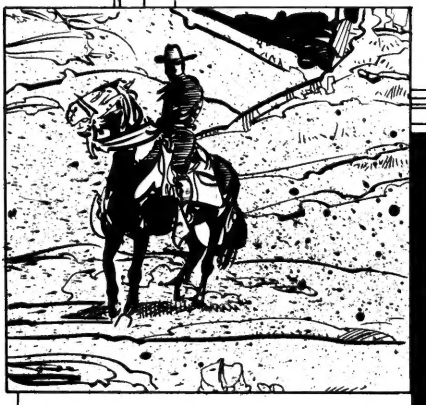
"He's changed the surface of his body into solid diamond!" Turner shouted. "Our blasters have no effect."

IF MOTHER AND I HAD BEEN LISTENING TO THIS AS A PLAY ON THE RADIO WE WOULD HAVE SHUT IT OFF LONG AGO.

SOLID DIAMOND, EH? I COULD HAVE A GREAT JEWELERY COLLECTION WITH SOMEONE LIKE HIM AROUND.

But one of the ranch-hands had been riding nearby, watching as Zoxx escaped the patrolmen. He spurred his horse into action.

The rider smoothly lassooed the alien criminal before he could reach the Patrolmen's rocket.



HERE'S THE SPACE COWBOY. TOO BAD THERE ISN'T A NICE MOON-GIRL FOR HIM TO RESCUE NOW.

I DON'T THINK I CAN FINISH READING THIS... OH, I MIGHT AS WELL DO IT. I'VE COME THIS FAR AND I'D LIKE TO SAY THAT I READ AT LEAST ONE OF CLAY'S STORIES.

"You really saved the day for us, friend," Turner said as he congratulated the stoic rider.

The Patrol ship soared into the heavens with the prisoner aboard. Life returned to normal on the alien moon.

THE ROPE IS MIGHTIER THAN THE BLASTER. IS THAT THE MORAL TO YOUR STORY, CLAY?

THE END... WHAT'S THE NEXT STORY CALLED? 'ASTEROID AMBUSH' BY BEN STEINBERG.

OH, MY LORD! THIS STUFF IS GIVING ME A HEADACHE. IT'S SUCH UTTER FOOLISHNESS

CLAY IS NOT GOING TO WASTE HIS TALENTS WRITING SUCH CONTEMPTIBLE JUNK. I'M GOING TO SET HIM RIGHT - WHETHER HE LIKES IT OR NOT.

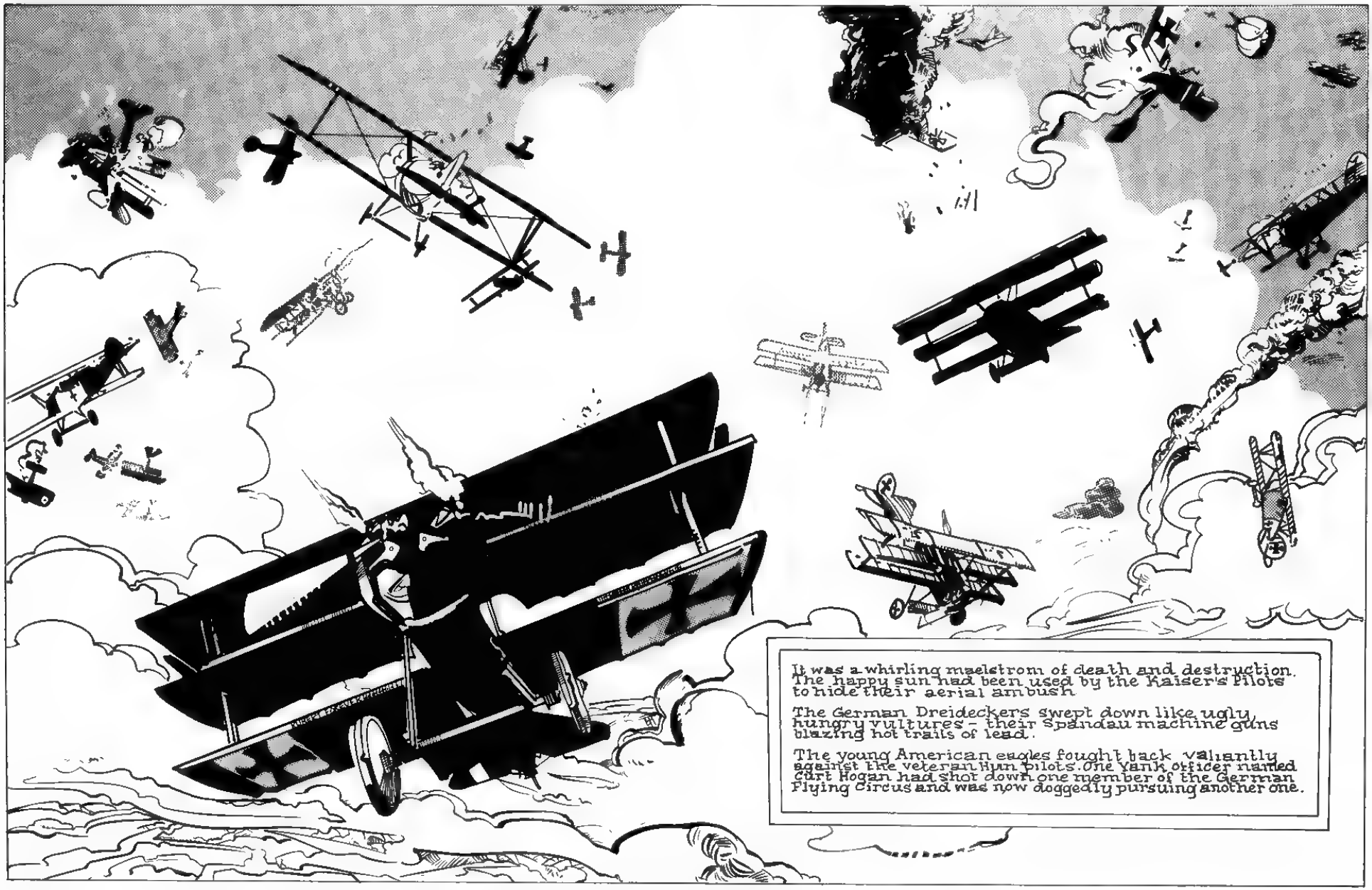
YOU RANG, MISS?

YES, CARLTON.

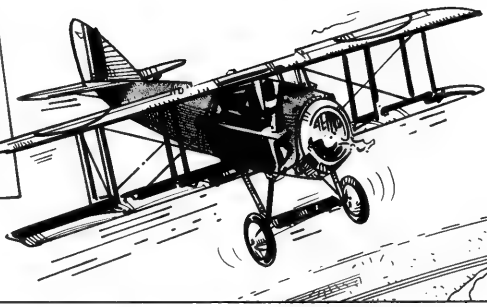
WOULD YOU TRASH THIS FOR ME, PLEASE. YOU MIGHT WANT TO WEAR YOUR GLOVES WHILE DOING SO.

I WAS WRITING ONE OF MY 'HUNTER HAWKE' STORIES FOR AIR WARRIORS MAGAZINE. HUNTER HAWKE WAS MY VERSION OF THE POPULAR G-8; FLYING SPY SERIES THAT WAS CURRENTLY ON THE STANDS.

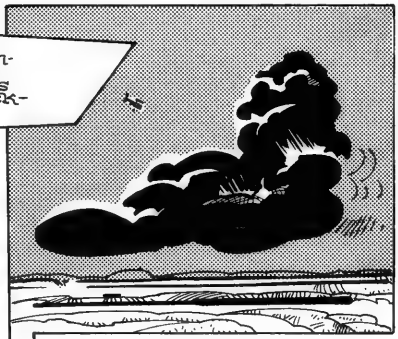
It was a glorious day for patrol. The American Squadron of SPAD 13's were cruising at 3,000 feet in a crystal clear sky. The sun shone down on the young pilots, lulling them into a false sense of security.


It was a whirling maelstrom of death and destruction. The happy sun had been used by the Kaiser's Pilots to hide their aerial ambush.
The German Dreideckers swept down like ugly, hungry vultures - their Spandau machine guns blazing hot trails of lead.
The young American eagles fought back valiantly against the veteran Hun pilots. One Yank officer named Curt Hogan had shot down one member of the German Flying Circus and was now doggedly pursuing another one.

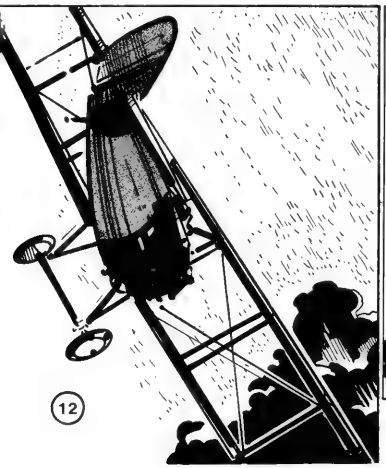
Hogan had chased the Hun about a mile away from the center of the huge dogfight. The SPAD's twin Vickers machine-guns were primed and ready for Hogans next kill. The Germans yellow Fokker was dead in Hogan's sights when the American felt his plane shudder. Something was happening to him - beyond his control.



The strange power was snatching Hogan away from his kill. He mustered all his strength as he pulled back his control stick - but to no avail.

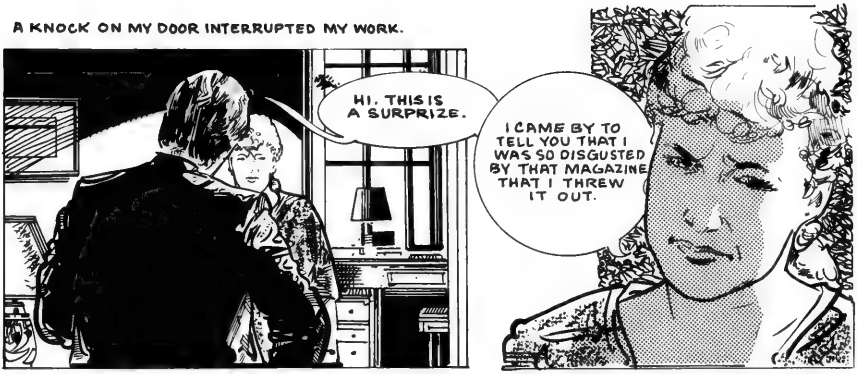


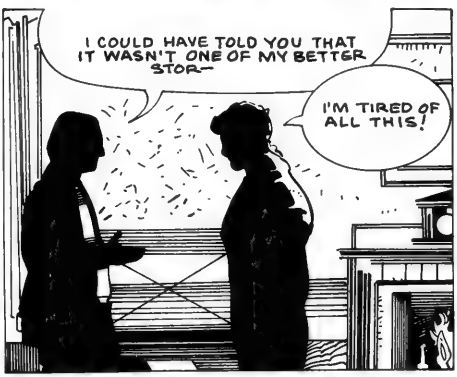
The dark cloud seemed as alien as a Martian on such a sunny day. Hogan was heading right into it.

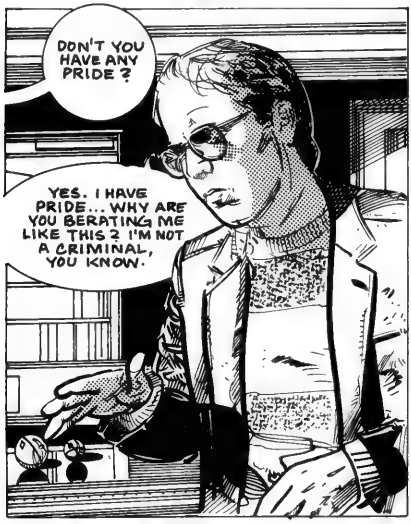


And no one saw him come out.

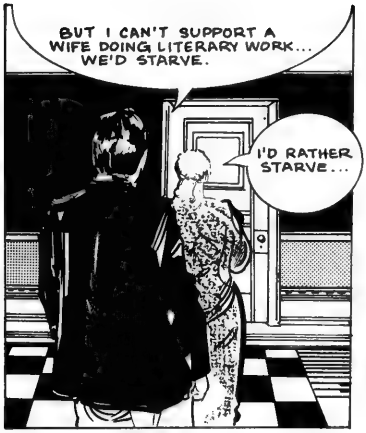
A KNOCK ON MY DOOR INTERRUPTED MY WORK.

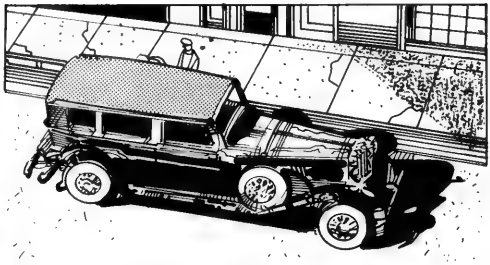






I'M BERATING YOU BECAUSE I THOUGHT WE MIGHT GET MARRIED SOMEDAY. BUT I SEE NOW THAT I COULD NEVER FACE MY PARENTS...
... AND TELL THEM MY HUSBAND WRITES WORSE FAIRY TALES THAN MOTHER GOOSE!



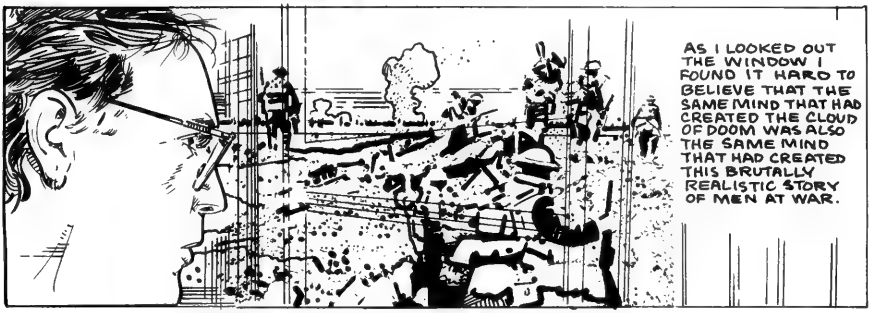


"... AND STILL HAVE SOME RESPECT FOR YOU," SHE SAID BEFORE SHE WENT DOWN TO HER WAITING CHAUFFEUR.

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.
CLAY. YOU'RE SOAKED.
DO TELL, VINCE. DO TELL.
VINCE GOT ME A TOWEL. I TOLD HIM ABOUT MY QUANDRY WITH CLARISSA.
SO, SHE SAYS THAT IF I DON'T START WRITING SOMETHING WORTHY OF ME SHE DOESN'T WANT TO SEE ME ANYMORE.
YOU'LL HAVE TO 'GHOST' THAT NEW HUNTER HAWKE STORY FOR ME. IT'S CALLED 'THE CLOUD OF DOOM'.
OKAY.
THANKS. I'LL DROP BY TOMORROW WITH MY NOTES AND FIRST CHAPTERS.
ARE YOU SURE ABOUT ALL THIS, CLAY?
NO. BUT I'VE GOT TO PROVE THAT I'M BETTER THAN MOTHER GOOSE.

AND SO THE BIG DAY CAME AT LAST. I SAT DOWN TO WRITE 'THE DIRT OF HEAVEN' – MY NOVEL OF A U.S. VETERAN OF THE WAR TO END ALL WARS.

DAMN! I'LL NEVER FINISH THIS THING. I JUST HAVEN'T GOT IT IN ME. I NEED MORE TIME. BUT I CAN'T SLOW DOWN. THESE LAST FEW YEARS I'VE FORCED MYSELF TO BECOME MORE PRODUCTIVE. THE WORDS HAD TO FLOW.


AS I LOOKED OUT THE WINDOW I FOUND IT HARD TO BELIEVE THAT THE SAME MIND THAT HAD CREATED THE CLOUD OF DOOM WAS ALSO THE SAME MIND THAT HAD CREATED THIS BRUTALLY REALISTIC STORY OF MEN AT WAR.

THE DIRT OF HEAVEN

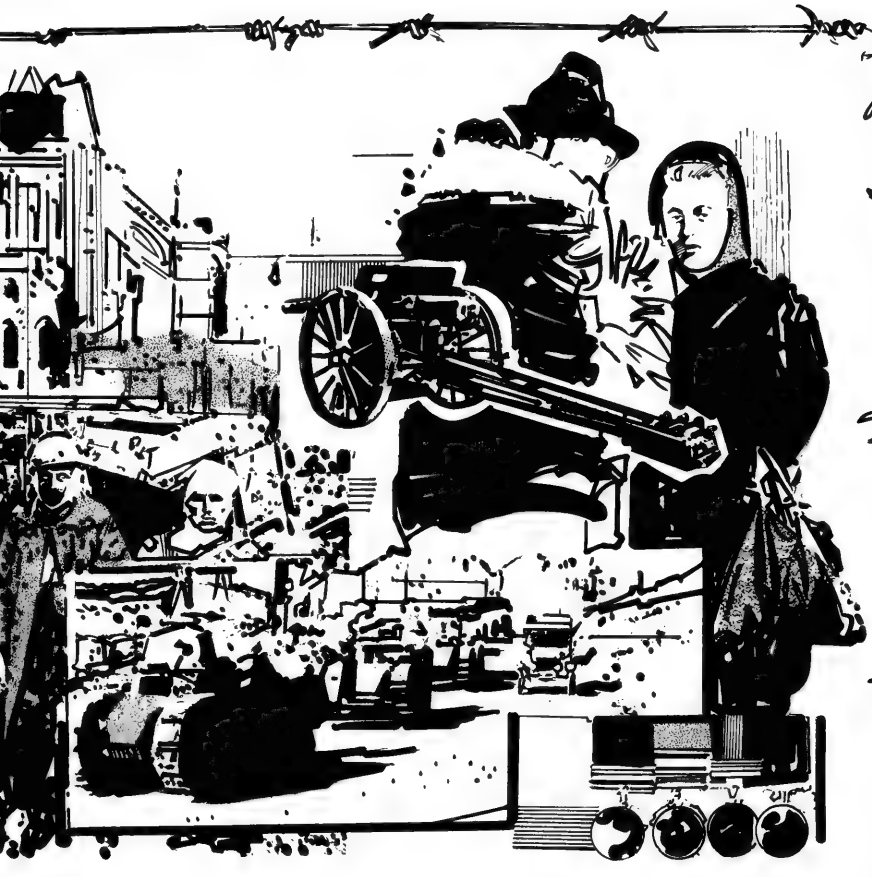
BY C.A. WASHBURN

VISIONS OF A BEAUTIFUL HARD COVER VOLUME – WITHOUT ANY PULP HERO ILLUSTRATIONS OR QUICK REMEDY ADVERTISEMENTS INSIDE – DANCED IN MY HEAD. I'D BE ABLE TO FACE MY FATHER AND SAY, "HERE IT IS. HERE'S A BOOK WITH MY NAME ON IT."

MY FATHER WAS A FRONT LINE VETERAN OF THE WAR IN FRANCE. SOME OF MY FONDEST CHILDHOOD MEMORIES WERE OF LISTENING TO HIM TELL ME ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCES IN EUROPE. AND LATER, WHEN I GREW UP, I REALIZED THAT HE REALLY DID NOT HAVE MANY FOND MEMORIES AT ALL, BESIDES HIS OWN WARTIME TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS.

MY FATHER'S A DOUR MAN. HE DOESN'T SMILE OR LAUGH MUCH. BUT THE FEW TIMES I REMEMBER HIM SMILING AND LAUGHING TO ME WERE WHEN HE WAS RECALLING HIS DOUGHBOY DAYS.

I REMEMBER HE DID NOT HAVE THE COMMAND OF LANGUAGE NEEDED TO DESCRIBE THE HORRORS OF WHAT HE SAW— BUT IT WAS IN HIS SUBTLE EXPRESSIONS AND TONE OF VOICE THAT HE SPOKE VOLUMES. MY OWN IMAGINATION EMBELLISHED WHAT HE TOLD ME AND, EVER SINCE, I'VE BEEN TRYING TO UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF WAR.



"HUNDREDS OF MEN DIED FOR JUST A FEW YARDS OF DIRT," MY FATHER HAD TOLD ME. "JUST A FEW LOUSY YARDS OF DIRT."

I KNEW THAT THE DIRT OF HEAVEN WOULD BE MY TOUGHEST TASK AS A WRITER UP TO THIS POINT IN MY CAREER. OUT OF ALL THE HUNDREDS OF PULP STORIES I HAD WRITTEN I KNEW THAT THIS STORY WOULD TAX MY IMAGINATION TO THE LIMITS. I'D WRITTEN ABOUT JUNGLES AND MOUNTAINS. ABOUT DESERTS AND POLAR REGIONS. ABOUT LOST CITIES AND LANDSCAPES ON ALIEN PLANETS. BUT DESCRIBING THE DEVASTATION OF MODERN WAR WOULD BE MY TOUGHEST CHALLENGE.

Chapter Three

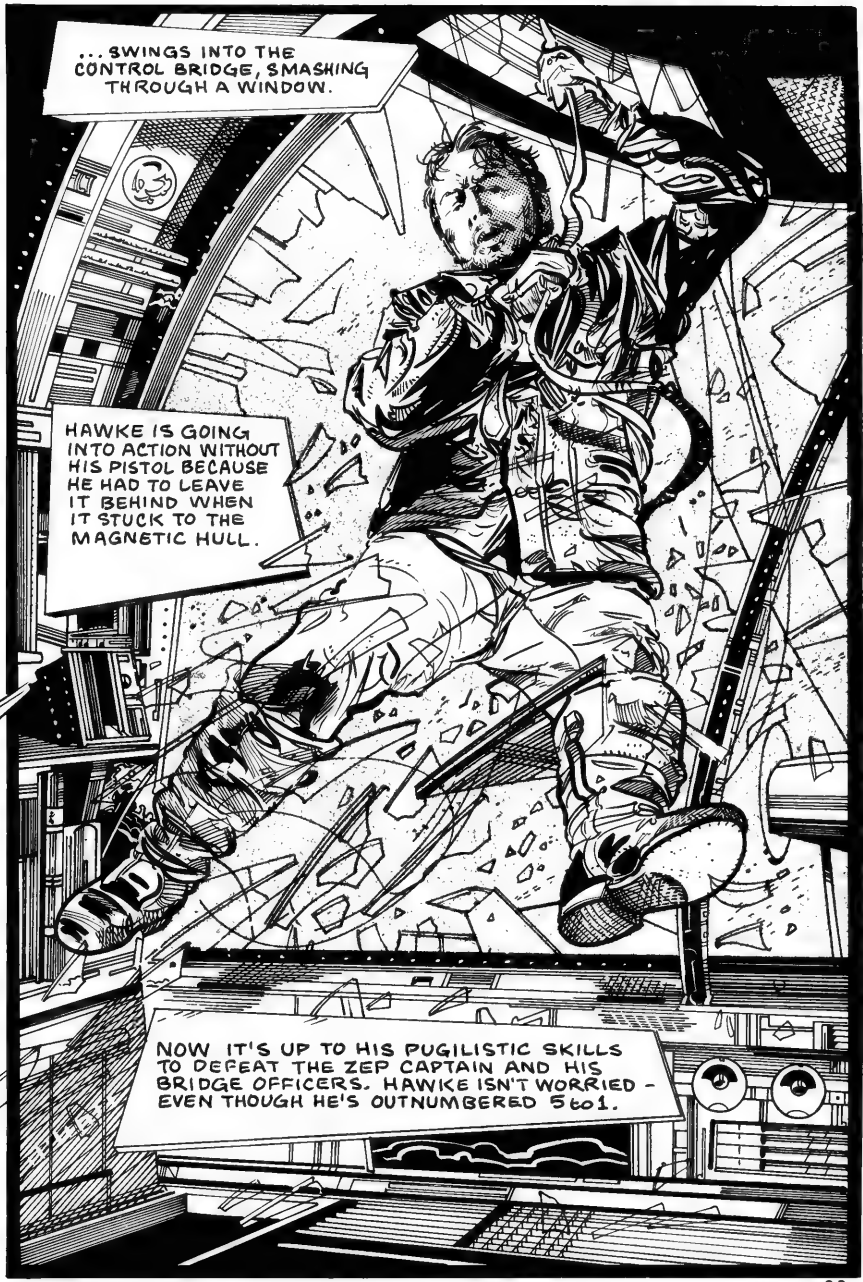
Colson left the village and started back to the front lines. His 12 hour leave was nearly over and he worried that he might not report back in time.

He had walked a mile from the village when he stopped along the side of the road.

He heard the sound of a distant engine and hoped that it would be a truck. But it wasn't a truck —
IT WAS A PLANE. MANY PLANES. ALL OF THEM RETURNING FROM A DOGFIGHT WITH FOKKER DREIDECKERS — OH, KNOCK IT OFF.
Colson sat down and rested. The planes had facinated him. Now he studied the sky and the clouds.
AND SUDDENLY HE SPOTTED THE CLOUD OF DOOM!
NUTS. FIRST I LET MY SELF-DOUBTS GET TO ME. NOW I'M BOTHERED ABOUT HAVING SOMBONE GHOST ONE OF MY STORIES.
THE HUNTER HAWKE STORY NOW BURST INTO MY BRAIN AS IF SOME DAM HAD GIVEN OUT.
HAWKE HAD LEARNED THE SECRET OF THE CLOUD.

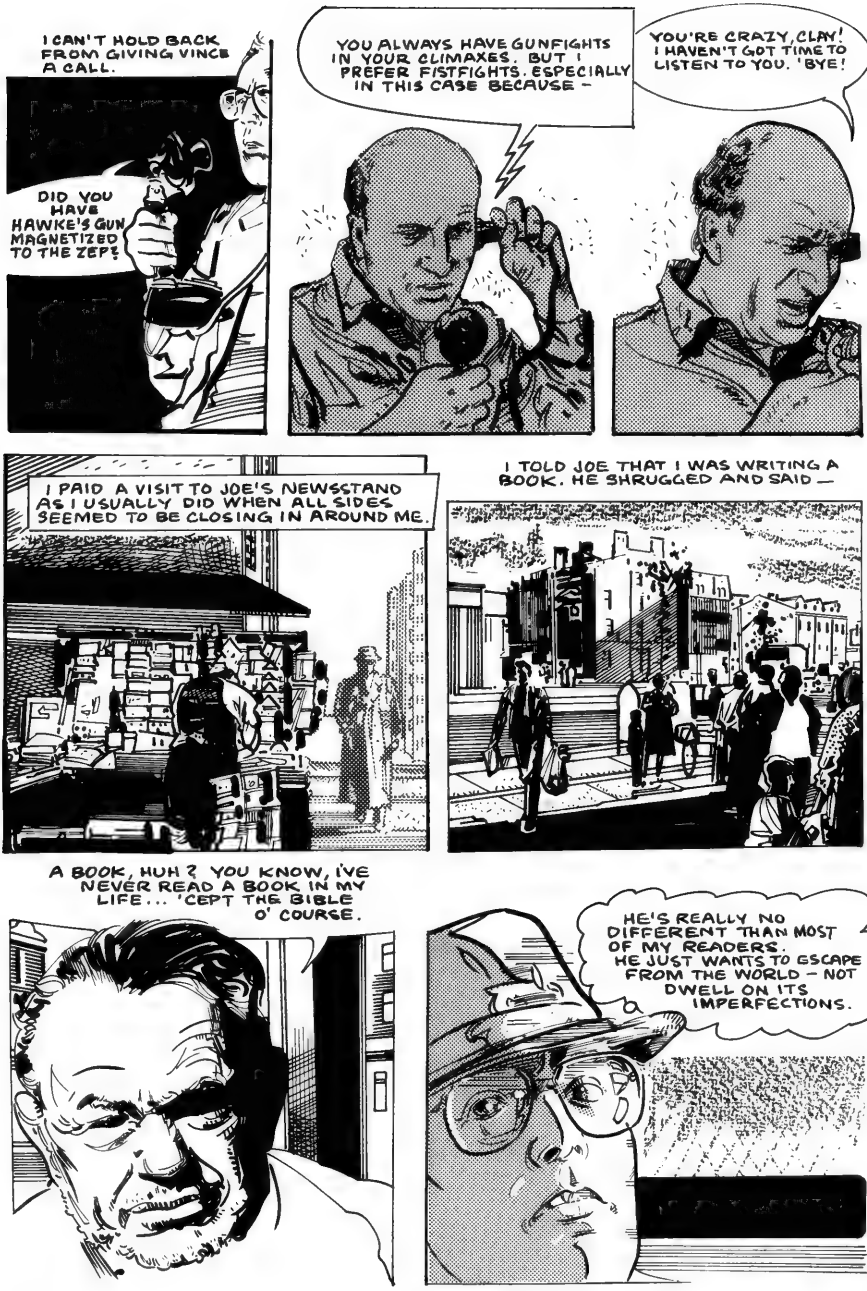
... THE PILOT DIRECTS HAWKE'S ATTENTION TO THE CLOUD OF DOOM.
HAWKE TELLS THE PILOT TO FLY OVER THE CLOUD — NOT INTO IT.
— AND DROPS INTO THE CLOUD.
THEN HE JUMPS OUT —
HE DOESN'T HAVE TROUBLE LANDING ON THE ZEP BECAUSE IT'S BEEN MAGNETICALLY POLARIZED.
INSIDE THE CLOUD HE SPOTS THE ZEPPELIN.

HAWKE'S METAL PARACHUTE HARNESS HAS HIM TRAPPED AGAINST THE ZEP'S MAGNETIC HULL.
HE'S FORCED TO WATCH A PLANE PULLED TO ITS DOOM.
HE FINALLY FREES HIMSELF..
... BUT NOT BEFORE HE WITNESSES A SECOND FIGHTER DESTROYED.
HAWKE MANEUVERS HIMSELF OVER TO A DANGLING MOORING LINE AND...


... SWINGS INTO THE CONTROL BRIDGE, SMASHING THROUGH A WINDOW.
HAWKE IS GOING INTO ACTION WITHOUT HIS PISTOL BECAUSE HE HAD TO LEAVE IT BEHIND WHEN IT STUCK TO THE MAGNETIC HULL.
NOW IT'S UP TO HIS PUGILISTIC SKILLS TO DEFEAT THE ZEP CAPTAIN AND HIS BRIDGE OFFICERS. HAWKE ISN'T WORRIED - EVEN THOUGH HE'S OUTNUMBERED 5 to 1.

HAWKE KNOWS HE HAS THE ELEMENT OF SURPRIZE. THE HUNS ARE AMAZED BY HIS ATTACK.
HAWKE TAKES CARE OF TWO OF THEM SWIFTLY.
HAWKE ELUDES HIM AND TURNS TO POUND A PILEDRIVER INTO THE HUN'S GUT.
THE ZEP CAPTAIN MOVES IN AND TRIES TO KNOCK HAWKE DOWN FROM BEHIND.
-BUT HAWKE RALLIES TO KNOCK HIM OUT.
ONE LAST STUBBORN OFFICER FIGHTS ON —

HAWKE TAKES CONTROL OF THE EVIL ZEPPELIN. GERMAN ENGINEERS HAVE WARPED THE LAWS OF NATURE INTO THE KAISER'S FAVOR, BUT NOW THEIR SCHEMES IS ABOUT TO BACKFIRE.
HAWKE PILOTS THE FLYING SHIP OUT OF ITS SELF-CREATED CAMOUFLAGE CLOUD—
— AND RIGHT INTO A SQUADRON OF FOKKERS. THE PLANES ARE PULLED INTO THE ZEP—
— LIKE FLIES TO FLYPAPER. THIS WILL BE A DAY THE FLYING CIRCUS WILL LONG REMEMBER.


I CAN'T HOLD BACK FROM GIVING VINCE A CALL.
DID YOU HAVE HAWKE'S GUN MAGNETIZED TO THE ZEP?
YOU ALWAYS HAVE GUNFIGHTS IN YOUR CLIMAXES, BUT I PREFER FISTFIGHTS. ESPECIALLY IN THIS CASE BECAUSE –
YOU'RE CRAZY, CLAY! I HAVEN'T GOT TIME TO LISTEN TO YOU. 'BYE!
I PAID A VISIT TO JOE'S NEWSSTAND AS I USUALLY DID WHEN ALL SIDES SEEMED TO BE CLOSING IN AROUND ME.
I TOLD JOE THAT I WAS WRITING A BOOK. HE SHRUGGED AND SAID –
A BOOK, HUH? YOU KNOW, I'VE NEVER READ A BOOK IN MY LIFE... 'CEPT THE BIBLE O' COURSE.
HE'S REALLY NO DIFFERENT THAN MOST OF MY READERS. HE JUST WANTS TO ESCAPE FROM THE WORLD – NOT DWELL ON ITS IMPERFECTIONS.

THERE WAS NO USE ARGUING WITH JOE ABOUT HOW TO MAKE THE BEST USE OF HIS LITERACY. YET, I WONDERED, WASN'T HE EVER CURIOUS ABOUT READING SOME OF THE MILLIONS OF WORDS THAT HE SOLD EVERY DAY BESIDES THE ONES THAT MERELY ENTERTAINED HIM?

I WAS NEVER NAIVE ENOUGH TO BELIEVE THAT THE FICTION-DONE-TO-FORMULA THAT I WROTE WAS READ BY GENIUSES OR RESPECTED BY MY PEERS. I KNEW IT WOULD NEVER BE REVIEWED BY BOOK CRITICS OR STUDIED IN ENGLISH CLASSES. I KNEW THAT MOST PARENTS OR LIBRARIANS WOULD RATHER GO INTO SOLITARY CONFINEMENT THAN ASK FOR MY AUTOGRAPH.

I'VE BEEN ACCUSED OF WRITING 'TO' THE MASSES INSTEAD OF 'FOR' THE MASSES.
AW, THE MASSES DON'T WANT TO READ ABOUT THEMSELVES. I SHOULD KNOW BETTER THAN THAT.
I KNOW WHAT THEY WANT. I GUESS I'M JUST HAPPIER BEING THE ENTERTAINER...
... RATHER THAN THE ENTERTAINED.

THE NEXT DAY I DROPPED IN ON VINCE.
HI, CLAY. COME ON IN. THE STORY IS FINISHED.
HMMM. WHERE DID THIS GIRL COME FROM? I DIDN'T HAVE A —
HAVE YOU READ VIRGIL GRANT'S BOOKS?
WHAT?
I WONDER IF HE'S DOWN AT THE TAVERN TODAY. I COULD INTRODUCE YOU TO HIM.
VIRGIL GRANT? THE AUTHOR?
YEAH. I'VE MET HIM A FEW TIMES OVER AT EDDIE'S. HE COULD TELL YOU EVERYTHING ABOUT LIFE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TRACKS
EDDIE'S WAS A BAR JUST OFF 5TH AVENUE. IT WASN'T A DIVE — BUT IT WASN'T THE COTTON CLUB EITHER. GRANT WAS THERE — SITTING FORLORNLY IN A CORNER.
EDDIE'S
SUITS & OVERCOATS $1.95 UP
BARBER SCHOOL
SHAVE 5¢
HAIRCUT 10¢

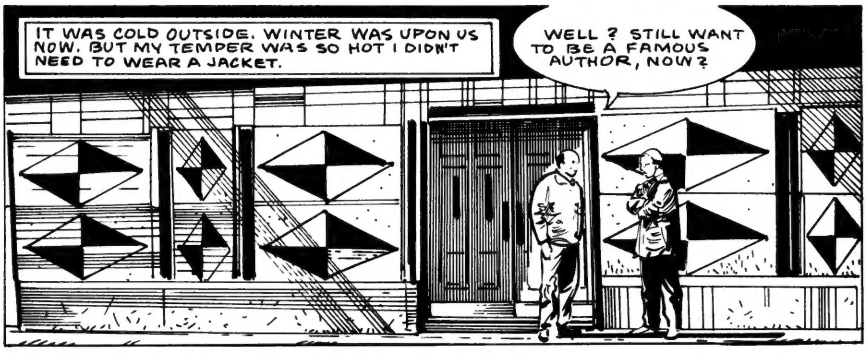
VIRGIL, I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET A BUDDY OF MINE. CLAY WASHBURN... CLAY, THIS IS VIRGIL.
SO, ARE YOU ANOTHER ONE OF THESE PENNY-A-WORD MERCENARIES?
ACTUALLY I'M JUST WORKING ON MY FIRST SERIOUS NOVEL RIGHT NOW.
HOW OLD ARE YOU? 30? 31? AREN'T YOU KINDA LATE TO BE STARTING A BOOK NOW? I HAD MY FIRST BOOK PUBLISHED WHEN I WAS 19.
AND A DAMN GOOD BOOK IT WAS, TOO... YOU'LL NEVER TOP IT.
UH... HOW ABOUT THREE BEERS, TINY? AND PUT IT ON MY TAB.
YEAH. YEAH.
HAVE YOU GOT ANY ADVICE FOR CLAY?
YEAH. READ MY BOOKS. STUDY EVERY WORD. NOTHING IS WASTED. MY EDITOR LOVES ME BECAUSE I DO MOST OF HIS WORK FOR HIM.

I'LL BE RIGHT— BURP— BACK. THE WATER GOD CALLS.
OKAY. SO THIS ISN'T ONE OF HIS BETTER DAYS.
YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN. HE'S TANKED.
IT'S A DARN SHAME. WE CAME TOO LATE. BUT WHO KNOWS, CLAY? THIS MIGHT BE AS CLOSE TO REAL LITERATURE AS WE'LL EVER GET.
GRANT SOON RETURNED AND WAS PRESENTED WITH HIS BILL.
FOUR DOLLARS AND WHAT? THAT'S MY TOTAL? YOU'VE GOTTA BE KIDDING!
I HOPE YOU TWO APPRECIATE THE TIME I'VE GIVEN YOU. I COULD MAKE GOOD MONEY GIVING LECTURES TO YOUNG WRITERS.
THE LECTURE YOU'RE GIVING US NOW IS MORE ELOQUENT THAN YOU REALIZE, PAL.

I DON'T KNOW WHY I KEEP COMING BACK TO THIS DUMP. THE BOOZE IS BAD. THE HELP IS RUDE. I COULD IMORTALIZE THIS PLACE IN A BOOK IF I WANTED TO.
IS THAT ENOUGH?
NO. YOU NEED TWO MORE BUCKS.
WELL. THAT'S ALL I'VE GOT. HEY, WILL YOU BOYS PITCH IN AND HELP ME OUT?
COME ON, VINCE. I'VE HAD ENOUGH.
'BYE, VIRGIL.
HUH? WHERE ARE YOU GUYS GOING?
THIS IS THE GRATITUDE I GET! I SHARE MY KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE WITH YOU AND ALL I GET ARE GOODBYES.
AW, I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER THAN TO TRUST YOU PENNY-A-WORD MERCENARIES. YOU'RE JUST BUMS. YA GOT NO CLASS.

HERE! NOW YOU CAN PAY YOUR BILL. JUST REMEMBER THAT US PENNY-A-WORD MER-CENARIES MAY NOT HAVE YOUR KIND OF PUBLIC RESPECT...

BUT AT LEAST WE KNOW HOW TO TREAT OUR OWN KIND. EVEN VAIN BIG-SHOTS LIKE YOU!


IT WAS COLD OUTSIDE. WINTER WAS UPON US NOW. BUT MY TEMPER WAS SO HOT I DIDN'T NEED TO WEAR A JACKET.
WELL? STILL WANT TO BE A FAMOUS AUTHOR, NOW?

HEY, HERE'S OUR BUS. COME ON! WE'LL HAVE TO RUN FOR IT

YOU GO AHEAD. I'M GOING TO WALK. I'VE GOT A LOT OF THINKING TO DO.